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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Exploitation of Captured Documents

1. This memorandum provides additional information on the problem of exploiting captured documents. Our memorandum of 14 December 1967 contained our recommendations for increasing Agency exploitation of these materials.

2. The FMA and 1401 Machine Systems

The Combined Document Exploitation Center (CDEC) has developed the US Government's most comprehensive bank of raw intelligence information on the war in South Vietnam. This file contains (1) all CDEC bulletins, complete translations, and untranslated captured documents from January 1966 to date, (2) all MACV IR's, (3) all interrogation reports from January 1967 to date, and a scattering of additional materials. These materials are photographed for use on multiple FMA film machines. These are 35 mm film spools similar to intellofax film. The materials in this file are indexed by subject and are retrieved by means of an optical dot system on the edge of the film.

3. DIA has this system in operation. CDEC has transmitted copies of all back films to DIA and sends new films to update the file once a month. DIA claims to make extensive use of this file system although complaints are voiced concerning the adequacy of the indexing. In addition, the equipment is overtaxed beyond its designed capacity resulting in a growing service backlog.

4. To search the file, all the tapes must be run through the equipment to be scanned for the required subject. This process now takes 4 hours because of the large volume of tapes. Thus, the system may be tied up for 4 hours searching for a single document. Film resolution is sometimes unclear but this problem can be coped with.

5. DIA is presently investigating the possibility of having the optical dot indexing system transferred to magnetic tape. If this is feasible, then the file would be searched utilizing a magnetic tape and documents could be reproduced using the FMA equipment. We have been in contact with DIA on this matter, and expect to hear from them next week.

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6. The Combined Intelligence Center (CICV) maintains a 1401 file of processed intelligence. All incoming raw intelligence with the exception of COMINT is indexed and fed into this system. Most of the files in this system contain operational intelligence, but it contains MACV's OB files and special agent reports which could be of use to us. This file is not presently available in Washington and we are unable to evaluate its quality and possible usefulness. SAVA and DIA have made arrangements to receive copies of these tapes, but they have not yet arrived. Machine runs made from the 1401 tape provide selected intelligence information and not full documents.

7. The acquisition of these two machine systems could provide immediate benefits to DDI production capabilities with only a marginal increment to present staffs. We would be able to search files which we do not now have. However, we will probably find the indexing system inadequate for many purposes and we understand these are the usual inadequacies resulting from coding and manual data transfer errors. Although we recommend these systems be made available to us, they will not be a substitute for analyst files. This is also the case at CDEC and CICV.

8. Utilization of the files should not present serious difficulty. The magnetic tapes would be held by OCS. The FMA machine and tapes could be located with CRS or one of our research components.

9. Publication of Results of Exploitation of Captured Documents

We have considered the proposal that the exploitation of captured documents be organized to provide a serial publication and concluded that such a publication would largely duplicate existing CICV efforts. The present CICV system of bulletin and document dissemination is adequate for our purposes and could support a serial publication based on documents.

10. Such a publication could be produced with an augmentation of from 3-4 to 10-12 additional analysts. The number would depend on the frequency of publication and selectivity of subject matter. For example, a weekly summary of captured documents highlights with an occasional wrap up piece could be produced by present OCI and OER staffs augmented by 3-4 analysts. In this case the content of the summaries would be selective and determined in the DDI. If content coverage and frequency of publication were to be determined by persons and organizations outside the DDI and the reporting system opened up to queries from the outside, the effort might require as many as 10-12 additional personnel.

Deputy Director
Economic Research

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